

WORLD WAR II IN SUMMARY (1939 - 1945)

I) AFTER POLAND: SITZKRIEG (phony war) 9/39 - 3/40

- A. Operation White: British naval blockade
- B. Maginot Line (lessons of history??)
 - 1. Bel to Switz = 1,000 forts w/ own power, H₂O, kitchens, phones, ammo, 8' thick roofs

II) SOVIET UNION TAKES ADVANTAGE OF "BOUGHT TIME"

- A. Lithuania, Latvia, & Estonia forced into treaties re: naval and air bases
- B. Finland refuses & is broken (Nov 39 - Mar 40)
- C. Soviets add part of Rumania to buffer zone

INITIAL GERMAN SUCCESS (1939-1940)

III) GERMAN CONQUEST OF DENMARK & NORWAY (APR 1940)

- A. Denmark falls easily
 - 1. thanks to paratroopers dressed in uniforms of other nations & hidden soldiers on a ship in harbor of Copenhagen
- B. Norway more stubborn
 - 1. role of fifth column vital (spies etc.) i.e. Quisling = traitor
- C. Germany gained valuable submarine bases, air bases, & food supplies

IV) GERMAN CONQUEST OF FRANCE (May - June 1940) BLITZKRIEG RETURNS!

- A. Confidence in Maginot Line leaves France unprepared
 - 1. Germans bypass Franco-German border & go around Maginot Line thru Belgium/Netherlands/Luxembourg
 - 2. Allied army moves north to halt Germans, but is cut off & surrounded
 - 3. Forced retreat to Dunkirk: "a miracle of deliverance"
 - a) approx. 850 civilian craft rescue 338+ thousands
- B. Paris Captured (June 14, 1940)
 - 1. Armistice signed by Petain in infamous rr car on June 22
 - a) Occupied France: Direct German control: the north
 - b) Vichy France: Petain as puppet: the south
 - c) Free French govt in London: De Gaulle
 - d) Maquis: underground guerrillas: "the resistance"
- C. Italy joins war - Mussolini believes victory in sight (June 10, 1940)

V) ENGLAND STANDS ALONE (summer 1940)

- A. Leadership of Churchill (Begins may 1940)
 - 1. inspiring: " I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat... We shall never surrender."
- B. Battle of Britain
 - 1. Goering convinces Hitler of value of air attack
 - a) Br. navy still superior to Ger.
 - 2. Object: Break Britain's will to exist: soften for invasion by land
 - 3. RAF + radar + ultra hold off German Luftwaffe, and thus invasion never happens
 - a) Germans not realize importance of radar
 - b) RAF pilot = new breed
 - (1) "Never was so much owed by so many to so few." Churchill
 - (2) in 3 months German losses were 2x the British!!
 - c) ultra decoder allowed receipt of vital information
 - 4. Goering's big error: switched from targeting airfields & communications to bombing London
 - a) Why? anger over Berlin bombings of RAF

VI) U.S. = "ALL MEASURES SHORT OF WAR." / "ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY."

- A. Neutrality Acts (1935-1937)
- B. All around military preparedness
- C. 50 Destroyer/naval base deal (1940)
- D. Selective Service Act (1940)
- E. Lend-Lease Act (1941) to countries considered vital to U.S. security
- F. Japanese Embargo (1941)
- G. Atlantic Charter (summer 1941): FDR & Churchill
 - 1. "All nations must come to the abandonment of force." (be able to choose their own govts.)
- H. American Merchant ships are armed (Nov 1941)

VII) BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC (1940-1943)

- A. "The Happy Time" for German U-Boats (summer--fall 1940)
 - 1. 217 ships sunk between Jul - Oct
- B. Battle of Britain ends = more energy put into defenses against U-Boats
- C. Hitler's mistake: low submarine production
- D. German wolf pack tactic: resurgence of success (mid 41 - early 42)

1. "easy hunting" : Atlantic coast & Gulf
- E. By 1943, w/ U.S. help, anti-sub campaign pretty much ends threat

VIII) AXIS OVERRAN BALKANS

- A. Tripartite Pact: Germany, Italy, & Japan agree to mutual aid (1940)
 1. Plan: sweep thru Balkans eastward & meet up w/ Japanese
- B. Greece refused pact > Hitler invaded successfully
 1. Saved Mussolini's failure
 2. Crete overwhelmed by airborne invasion
- C. Yugoslavia refused pact = Blitzkrieg in all its fury!

IX) SUCCESSES BY ROMMEL (Desert Fox) IN NORTH AFRICA (1941)

- A. Mussolini opened up front in Africa
 1. Felt Britain wouldn't defend possessions
- B. Afrika Korps + Rommel; a genius in tank warfare -- saves Mussolini again
 2. Driving for Suez Canal; of course Britain will defend!

1941: YEAR OF TWO MAJOR MISTAKES FOR THE AXIS POWERS

X) HITLER ATTACKS SOVIET UNION (June 1941)

- A. Germany disregards pact w/ USSR -- begins Operation Barbarossa
- B. Ger successes slow, but progressive during first summer
 1. Oct 1941, Hitler confident of success
 2. Leningrad surrounded & sieged: massive suffering: "the 900 days"
 - a) Leningrad pop from 4 mill to 2.5 mill
- C. General Georgi Zhukov manages to save Moscow from total takeover
- D. Why not Successful?
 1. Hitler's strategic mistakes
 2. "scorched earth" policy of the Russians
 3. The Russian winter : "General Winter" to you!

XI) JAPAN ATTACKS U.S. AT PEARL HARBOR (DEC 7, 1941)

- A. This "day in infamy" solidifies American public
 1. approx. 2,500 dead
- B. U.S. officially declares war: readies self for another "total war"

VICTORY IN EUROPE (1942-1945)

XII) ALLIES ADVANCE: N. AFRICA TO ITALY (1942-1943)

- A. Br. General Montgomery from east (Egypt) + General Eisenhower from west (Fr. N. Africa)
 1. Rommel crushed in vise by 1943 in Tunisia
- B. Allies then cross Mediterranean & invade Sicily: took 39 days
 1. two weeks after Sicily, Mussolini out of govt - later shot
 2. new govt signs armistice; unconditional surrender
 3. Italy declares war on Germany

XIII) RUSSIAN COUNTER OFFENSIVE (Summer 1943-1945)

- A. Stalingrad: Jan 1943 finally a victory for Russians
 1. began Aug 1942 -- 6 months battle
 2. revenge for Leningrad!
 3. Russians annihilated 300,000 German troops
- B. Communists seized initiative
 1. Drove nazis back thru Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, & Poland
- C. April 1945 Russians enter Berlin

XIV) ANGLO-AMERICAN INVASION OF FRANCE: D - DAY (JUNE 6, 1944)

- A. The Grand Alliance: 1943 = U.S. + GB + USSR
 1. Agreements:
 - a) seek unconditional surrender
 - b) USSR would join fight against Japan after defeat of Germany
 - c) replace the League of Nations
- B. Operation Overlord a consideration since 1942
 1. Stalin was upset that it wasn't carried out sooner
- C. By 1944: 1.5 mill troops amassed in GB (+ ships etc.)
- D. Germans did not expect an invasion thru the "Atlantic Wall" : (mines, bunkers, etc.)
 1. Why? Because a "phantom army" had been issued false orders to advance to Calais, a Fr. port not part of the "wall"
- E. Nazis strong, but not anticipate full on blitzkrieg - "Allied Style"

XV) INVASION AND SURRENDER OF GERMANY

- A. Massive German counterattack: Battle of the Bulge
 - 1. Unexpected by Allies that Hitler would throw full force into offensive move instead of saving troops for final defense of Germany itself
 - a) Pushed Allies back 40-50 miles, but only really delayed the Allied advance one month
 - 2. "The Last Blitzkrieg" failed
 - a) Hitler had bet too much when he could not afford it
 - 3. The Yalta Conference (Feb 1945)
 - a) Another "Big Three" make decisions on postwar control & territorial arrangements in Europe
 - I) Germany to be divided, USSR big brother to E. Europe, etc.
 - II) Generally, many concessions made to Soviets for guarantee of attack on Japan
 - 4. Final surrender of Germany: May 8, 1945: V - E Day!!!!
 - a) Hitler had committed suicide
 - b) German troops in Italy had given up in April

WAR IN THE PACIFIC: EARLY JAPANESE SUCCESS

XVI) JAPAN/SOVIETS SIGN NON-AGGRESSION PACT (APRIL 41)

XVII) DEC 41: JAPANESE HAD MANILA(almost), WAKE IS. , GUAM, & HONG KONG

XVIII) PACIFIC BLUEPRINT:

- A. U.S. fleet crippled
- B. Meantime, quickly overrun SE Asia & set up defense
- C. Then, Japanese could exploit SE Asia at own leisure

XIX) FEB 42: SINGAPORE DISASTER (+ Dutch E Indies, Malaya , & Burma)

- A. Britain had all protection facing seaward: attack came from land!

XX) JAN - APRIL 42: PHILIPPINES FELL AFTER TOUGH FIGHT

- A. Manila an open city: Homma moves in
 - 1. Homma "soft" on Manila, removed
 - 2. Later tried as a war criminal on Mac Arthur's orders and shot
- B. Bataan Peninsula surrenders (April)
 - 1. Bataan Death March: 60-65 miles, 75,000 started -- 54,000 finished
- C. "I shall return" : Mac Arthur

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC: 1942 - 1945

XXI) TIDE TURNS: BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA (May 1942)

- A. Japanese advance stopped just short of Australia

XXII) DOOLITTLE RAID ON TOKYO (April 42): " 30 seconds over "

- A. Insignificant except as American morale booster

XXIII) JAPANESE EASTWARD EXPANSION HALTED AT MIDWAY (June 1942)

- A. Yamamoto vs. Nimitz
 - 1. No surprise: we had broken code!
- B. Rising sun begins to set
 - 1. Japanese threat to Hawaii & U.S. ended

XXIV) THE SOUTH PACIFIC: GUADALCANAL & NEW GUINEA

- A. Guadalcanal itself taken easily: provided base of operations
 - 1. However... off Guadalcanal = a seesaw battle (Aug - Nov 1942)
 - 2. Final victory set stage for advance up "ladder" of Solomon Is.
- B. New Guinea victories for Allies (1943-1945)
 - 1. Burma campaign: costly but valuable
- C. Objective: encirclement of Rabaul, then on to the Philippines

XXV) THE CENTRAL PACIFIC: ISLAND HOPPING AT ITS BEST

- A. Gilbert, Marshall, Caroline, & Marianas Is. = "unsinkable aircraft carriers"
- B. Strategy: seize key islands, bypass others = "island hopping"
- C. Tarawa: lessons learned (Nov 43)
- D. Saipan: lg enuf for B-29's (June 15, 1944)
 - 1. takeover of Guam to follow
- E. Finally, the Philippines (Oct 44 - Feb 45)
 - 1. Leyte Gulf: taken first, secured by Dec
 - 2. He did return: Mac Arthur
 - 3. Manila retaken: "instant replay"

XXVI) CLOSER TO TOKYO

- A. Iwo Jima: (Feb - Mar 45)
 - 1. w/750 mi. Tokyo
 - 2. 7 months of pre-invasion bombing
 - 3. "uncommon valor was a common virtue"
 - 4. Costliest operation in Marine history
- B. Okinawa: (Apr - Jun 45)
 - 1. only 325 mi. south of Japanese island of Kyushu
 - 2. Most intense Kamikaze campaign
 - a. "divine wind"
 - 3. 110,000 Japanese died, 11,000 prisoners

XXVII) THE ATOM BOMB & SURRENDER OF JAPAN

- A. July 1945: Potsdam Declaration
 - 1. a surrender ultimatum to Japan
 - 2. supported by Truman after Alamagordo
- B. Hiroshima: Aug 6, 1945 -- "Little Boy"
 - 1. Uranium bomb dropped by the Enola Gay destroys the city
 - 2. approx 130,000 killed and wounded
- C. Soviets declare war and begin penetration
- D. Nagasaki: Aug 9, 1945 -- "Fat Man"
 - 1. Plutonium bomb destroys the city
- E. V -- J Day!!
 - 1. Sept 2, 1945
 - 2. Japan: Shigemitsu signs terms of surrender

